



The President's Daily Brief

15 December 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Pakistani forces appear to be on the verge of capitulating in the East. (Page 1)

The military situation in Cambodia is discussed on Page 4.

An agreement on national fishing rights has cleared the way for the UK, Denmark, and Ireland to sign the EC accession treaty. (Page 5)

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

Pakistani forces appear to be on the verge of capitulating in the East. Despite his resignation yesterday, Governor Malik and his military adviser, General Farman Ali, sent a message early this morning to UN Secretary General Thant claiming that President Yahya wants an immediate cease-fire to permit talks aimed at bringing hostilities to an end. The message stated that Yahya desired "honorable conditions for Pakistani troops and protection of civilians."

Although a similar initiative last week by Farman Ali did not have Yahya's approval and was quashed by Islamabad, the deteriorating situation in the East may well have convinced Yahya to call it quits.

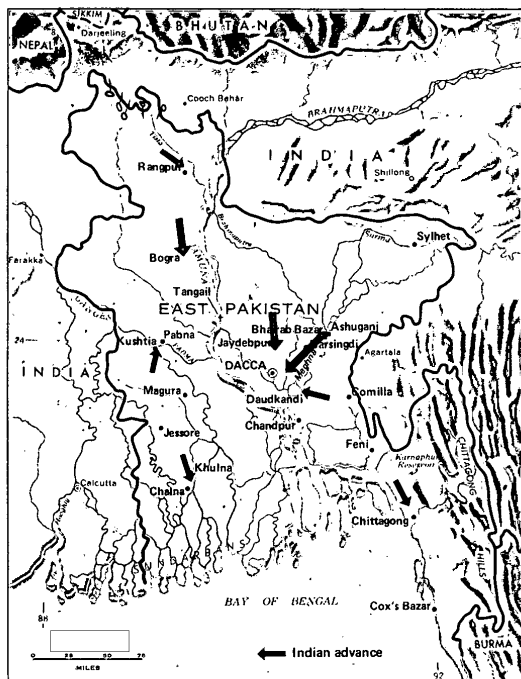
Yesterday, General Niazi, Islamabad's army commander in East Pakistan, said he wanted a cease-fire. Only a few days ago, he had taken a vehement stand against surrendering. Niazi's proposal, which he asked the US consul in Dacca to transmit to New Delhi, calls for an immediate cease-fire, the regrouping of Pakistani armed forces in areas to be mutually agreed upon, and guarantees for their safety and the safety of the Biharis and others who have helped the East Pakistan government since last March. Niazi also promised that he would abide by any UN Security Council decision providing for a permanent settlement of the conflict.

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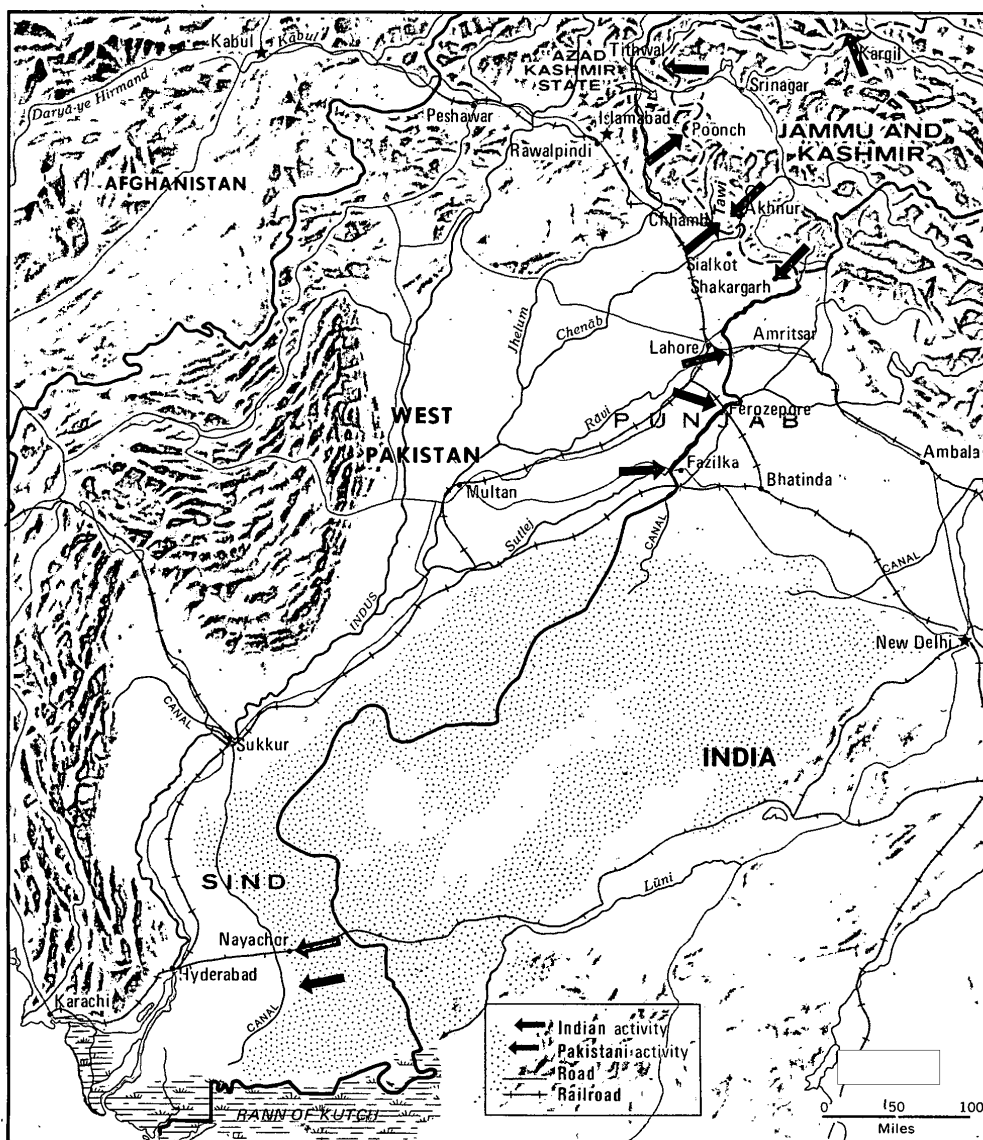
Commenting on Islamabad's options after the defeat of the Pakistani Army in the East, the US Embassy in Islamabad estimates that West Pakistan would probably prefer to cut its losses and concede the loss of East Pakistan--if this can be done with honor--rather than continue fighting against increasing odds in the West. The government's acceptance of the loss of East Pakistan and agreement to halt the fighting in the West would help keep the army intact as an institution, which, in turn, would deter the emergence of a more radical military leadership. The government's control of the media would facilitate efforts to make defeat more palatable to the public.

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PAKISTAN

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In the fighting yesterday the Indians began shelling military targets in Dacca as their armored and infantry units probed the city's outer defense perimeter. Although the Indians now claim to have sealed off all escape routes from the capital, they may be holding back from an all-out attack in hopes that the Pakistanis will decide against a bloody last-ditch stand. The Indians claim that some Pakistani troops around the city have already surrendered. Dacca's civil administration has virtually collapsed and most high-level Islamabad-appointed officials have sought refuge in the International Hotel.

Indian forces are reported to have advanced to about eight miles from Chittagong, East Pakistan's most important port. The Indians claim they are giving the city a heavy pounding from the air and sea. Elsewhere in the province, some Pakistani forces continue to hold a few isolated spots. Where the Indians are now in firm control refugees are beginning to trickle back to their homes from India. According to a representative of the UN High Commission for Refugees, 30,000 people have returned so far, most of them heads of family who are exploring conditions.

According to the Indian press, New Delhi has agreed to send civil servants into East Pakistan to help the new Bangla Desh government set up an administrative network there.

Although Bangla Desh authorities recognize the need for Indian expertise, their request for Indian aid is also motivated by a desire to prevent radical groups from seizing control in many areas where the administrative structure has lapsed.

On the western front, the situation remains largely unchanged. Except for patrolling and some small-unit clashes there was little fighting anywhere yesterday, except in the Sialkot sector where the Indians said they were trying to capture the town of Shakargarh, ten miles over the border.

* * *

Although more than a dozen Soviet ships are now in the Indian Ocean, only four--two Kotlin-class destroyers and two minesweepers--are naval surface combatants. These four ships are currently in the far western sector of the Arabian Sea, well removed from the India-Pakistan theater. The one Soviet submarine known to be in the Indian Ocean is an F-class diesel attack unit believed to be near Socotra.

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Three ships of the Pacific Fleet are now in the South China Sea, however, suggesting that the Soviets are planning to augment their Indian Ocean forces. These ships, a Kynda-class guided missile cruiser, a J-class guided missile submarine, and a tanker, were some 400 miles south of Taiwan today, and could enter the Indian Ocean via the Malacca Straits this weekend.

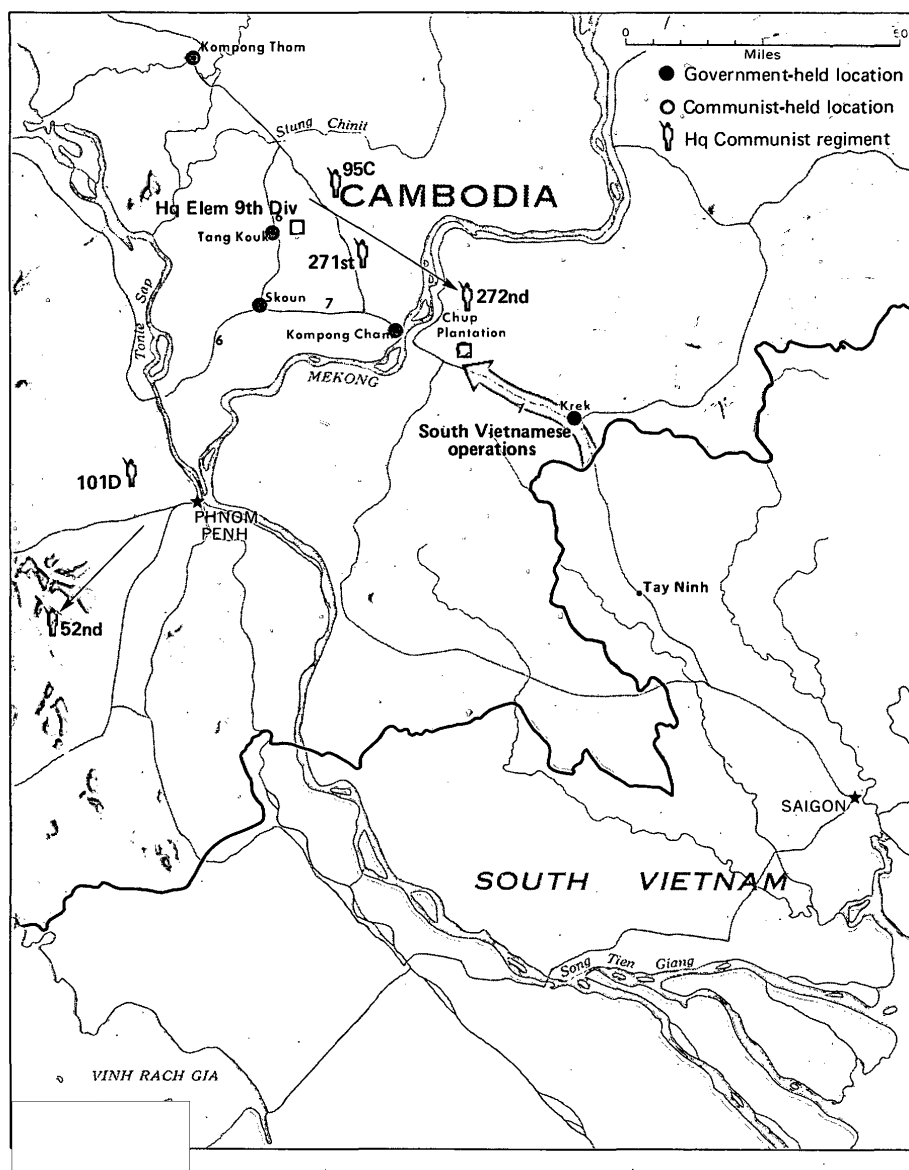
[REDACTED] ship movements suggest another task group may be headed to the Indian Ocean. Members of this three-ship task group, possibly led by a Kotlin-class destroyer located east of the Kuriles on 13 December,

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Two more Soviet combatants--Kresta- and Kotlin-class large anti-submarine ships--moved south out of the Sea of Japan on 14 December. These units have

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CAMBODIA

The Viet Cong's 272nd Regiment has withdrawn from Route 6 and now is located just north of the Chup rubber plantation, where it could be used to counter South Vietnamese operations in the southern part of the plantation. Two other regiments are moving eastward, but remain within striking distance of Route 6. Enemy reconnaissance units are still active along the road, and a headquarters element of the Communist 9th Division recently moved closer to Tang Kouk, where the morale and defenses of government troops remain shaky.

Farther north, the Communists also are keeping the pressure on government forces isolated at Kompong Thom. According to the US defense attaché, thinly spread government forces are totally dependent on aerial resupply and are highly vulnerable to Communist harassment.

In the Phnom Penh area, the Phuoc Long Front's 52nd Regiment has returned to its normal base area some 35 miles southwest of the capital, apparently to rest and refit following about six weeks of activity near Phnom Penh. Other units remain close to the city, however. Cambodian Army units on clearing operations west of Phnom Penh have had little contact with the Communists, but are staying close to the roadways.

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NOTE

European Communities: An agreement on the troublesome question of fishing rights has cleared the way for the UK, Denmark, and Ireland to sign the EC accession treaty. The agreement permits exclusive national fishing rights within a six-mile limit that can be extended to 12 miles in areas where fishing is the main industry. Norway, however, is dissatisfied with this arrangement and is expected to delay signing in hopes of getting better terms. Although the ratification process is not likely to be completed until late next year, the UK is already moving rapidly to get in step with its new partners. At the early December meeting of the Group of Ten finance ministers in Rome, Britain carefully concerted its position with that of the Six, and it has endorsed the EC's position on the pending trade negotiations with the US.

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